CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database, the

2   method comprising:

3   taking a physical inventory;

4   creating raw inventory data;

5   transferring the raw inventory data to a web server;

6   converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database;

7   creating a copy of the asset management database;

8   reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy

9   of the asset management database by way of a web browser; and

10   updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.

1   2.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 1 wherein taking physical inventory and creating raw inventory data further

3   comprises, with a hand held bar code scanning device:

4   scanning a location code;

5   scanning assets codes associate with that location code;

6   repeating the scanning step at a plurality of locations and for a plurality of assets codes;

7   storing the location codes and the asset codes in the hand held bar code scanning device.

1   3.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 2 wherein storing the location codes and the asset codes in the hand held bar code

3   scanning device further comprises storing the location codes and the asset codes in a file in the

4   hand held bar code scanner.

1   4.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 3 wherein storing the location codes and asset codes in a file further comprises

3   storing the location codes and asset codes in a comma delimited ASCII test file.

1   5.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 3 wherein transferring the raw inventory data to a web server further comprises

3   copying the file to a web server using a file transfer protocol (FTP) program.

1   6.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 3 wherein transferring the raw inventory data to a web server further comprises;

3   moving the file to an intermediate device; and then

4   copying the file from the intermediate device to the web server.

1   7.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises

3   broadcasting the file using electromagnetic waves.

1   8.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises:

3   copying the file to a semi-permanent storage device; and then

4   copying the file from the semi-permanent storage device to the intermediate device.

1   9.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 8 wherein copying the file to a semi-permanent storage device further comprises

3   copying the file to a floppy disk.

1   10.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises moving the

3   file to a computer system having an internet connection.

1   11.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 1 wherein converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database further

3   comprises converting the raw inventory data into a structured query language (SQL) format

4   database having fields for location codes and associated asset codes.

1   12.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 11 further comprising creating additional fields associated with each asset code to

3   identify a person who performs the reconciliation step.

1   13.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 1 wherein reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding

3   records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser further comprises:

4   invoking a web browser program;

5   entering a user identification;

6   entering a password;

7   displaying corresponding records between the intermediate database and the copy of the

8   asset management database;

9   reconciling the corresponding records creating reconciled records; and

10   marking at least some of the reconciled records as accepted.

1   14.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 13 wherein invoking a web browser program further comprises invoking an

3   Internet Explorer® web browser.

1   15.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 13 wherein displaying corresponding records between the intermediate database

3   and the copy of the asset management database further comprises:

4   displaying a record from the intermediate database based on an asset code; and

5   displaying a record from the copy of the asset management database based on the asset

6   code.

1   16.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 13 wherein updating the asset management database with records accepted during

3   the reconciling step further comprises copying to the asset management database reconciled

4   records marked as accepted.

1   17.   The method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database as

2   defined in claim 1 wherein taking a physical inventory further comprises taking a physical

3   inventory of computer assets.

1   18.   A method of taking a physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database, the method comprising:

3   scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying

4   assets to create inventory data;

5   transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server;

6   converting the inventory data into an intermediate database;

7   reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset

8   management database by way of a web browser; and

9   updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.

1   19.   The method of taking a physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against

2   an asset management database as defined in claim 18 wherein scanning with a hand held scanner

3   bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets further comprises:

4   scanning a plurality of bar codes identifying locations; and

5   scanning a bar code identifying at least one asset associated with each location.

1   20.   The method of taking a physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against

2   an asset management database as defined in claim 19 wherein creating inventory data further

3   comprises storing the bar codes identifying the locations and also storing the bar codes identifying

4   assets in a file in the hand held scanner.

1   21.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 20 wherein transferring the inventory data from the

3   hand held scanner to a web server further comprises transferring the file from the hand held

4   scanner to the web server.

1   22.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 21 wherein transferring the file from the hand held

3   scanner to the web server further comprises transferring the file using a file transfer protocol (FTP)

4   program.

1   23.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 21 wherein transferring the file from the hand held

3   scanner to the web server further comprises;

4   transferring the file from the hand held scanner to an intermediate device; and

5   transferring the file from the intermediate device to the web server using the FTP protocol.

1   24.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 23 wherein transferring the file from the hand held

3   scanner to the intermediate device further comprises broadcasting the file using electromagnetic

4   radiation.

1   25.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 23 wherein transferring the file from the hand held

3   scanner to the intermediate device further comprises:

4   copying the file to a disk; and then

5   copying the file from the disk to the intermediate device.

1   26.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 23 wherein transferring the file from the hand held

3   scanner to the web server further comprises;

4   transferring the file from the hand held scanner to a laptop computer; and

5   transferring the file from laptop computer to the web server using the FTP protocol.

1   27.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 18 wherein converting the inventory data into an

3   intermediate database further comprises converting the inventory data into a structured query

4   language (SQL) database resident on the web server.

1   28.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 18 wherein reconciling records in the intermediate

3   database against corresponding records in the asset management database by way of a web browser

4   further comprises:

5   making a copy of the asset management database available on the web server; and

6   reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy

7   of the asset management database.

1   29.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 28 further comprising, before the step of making a

3   copy of the asset management database, placing an identifying indicia on a portion of each record

4   in the asset management database.

1   30.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 29 wherein updating the asset management

3   database with records accepted during the reconciling step further comprises writing the updated

4   records without the identifying indicia.

1   31.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 30 further comprising, after the reconciling step is

3   complete:

4   searching the asset management database for records having the identifying indicia; and

5   thereby

6   identifying assets that were not found during the physical inventory.

1   32.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 29 wherein placing an identifying indicia on a

3   portion of each record in the asset management database further comprises appending a code to the

4   end of each seat code.

1   33.   The method of taking physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an

2   asset management database as defined in claim 32 wherein appending a code to the end of each

3   seat code further comprises appending the letters "WH" to the end of each seat code.

1   34.   A method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management

2   database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory, the method comprising:

3   placing identifying indicia on each seat record in the asset management database;

4   taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical

5   inventory data in a data file within the portable bar code scanning device;

6   transferring the data file to a web server;

7   transforming the data file into an intermediate database;

8   reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset

9   management database;

10   writing seat records, associated with assets, to the asset management database without the

11   identifying indicia; and

12   identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management

13   database by identifying seat records having the identifying indicia.

1   35.   The method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management

2   database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory as defined in claim 34 wherein

3   placing identifying indicia on each seat record in the asset management database further comprises

4   appending a code to the end of each seat code.

1   36.   The method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management

2   database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory as defined in claim 35 wherein

3   appending a code to the end of each seat code further comprises appending the letters "WH" to the

4   end of each seat code.

1   37.   The method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management

2   database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory as defined in claim 34 wherein

3   taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical

4   inventory data in a data file within the portable bar code scanning device further comprises, at a

5   plurality of locations:

6   scanning a location code that uniquely identifies the location; and

7   scanning at least one asset code of an asset at the location.

1   38.   The method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management

2   database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory as defined in claim 34 wherein

3   transferring the data file to a web server further comprises:

4   coupling the portable bar code scanning device to an internet connection; and

5   transferring the data file to the web server using an FTP program.

1   39.   The method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management

2   database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory as defined in claim 34 wherein

3   reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset

4   management database further comprises:

5   making a copy of the asset management database residing on the web server;

6   reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy

7   of the asset management database.